

2008

# A Space for Absence

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Timothy P. Dalton entitled A SPACE FOR ABSENCE has been approved by his or her committee as satisfactory completion of the thesis or dissertation requirement for the degree of Master of Fine Arts

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December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008

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A SPACE FOR ABSENCE

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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## **Introduction**

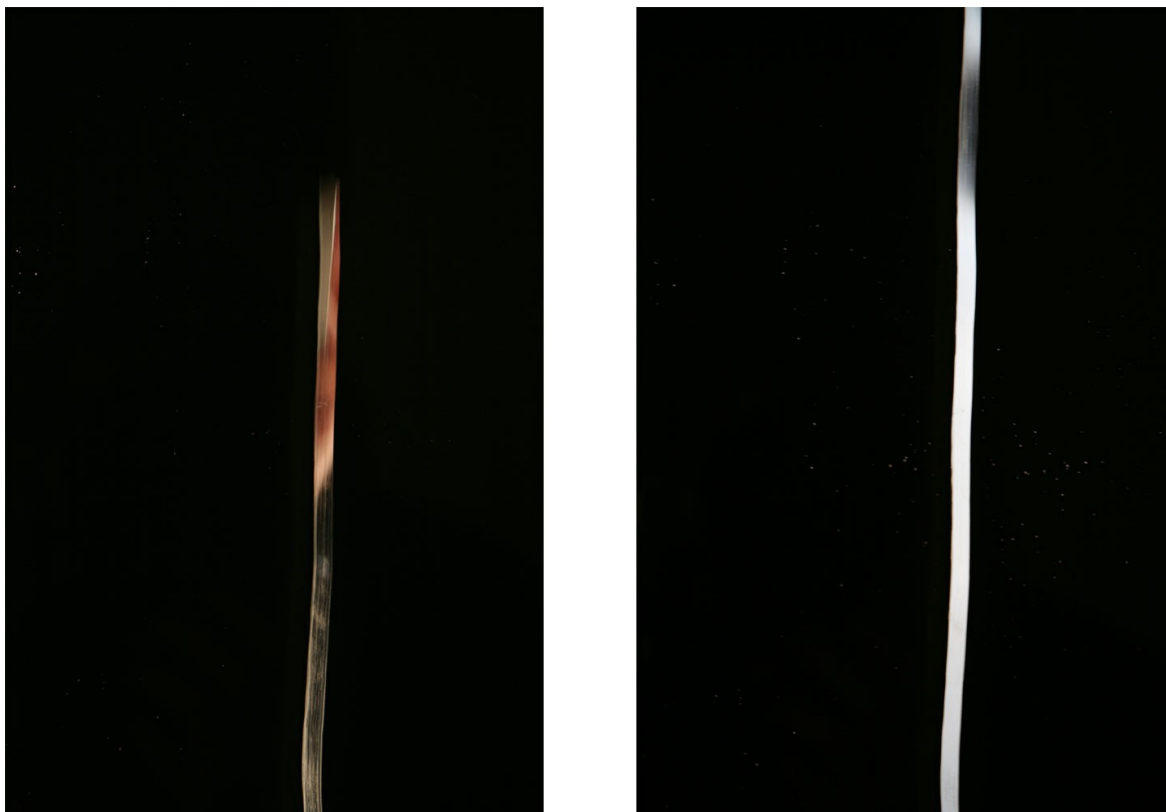
This thesis focuses on the evolution of my work created during my two years of study at Virginia Commonwealth University. Although I touch upon my influences what I am writing is a reflection after the fact that does not necessarily encompass my original intent or inspirations for these works. I find my inspiration from personal discoveries within my daily life. Light flickering through the rails of a fence as I walk by makes me more aware of my body's movement in space. Watching the steady condensation of water droplets forming on a fountain creates a moment of pause within the world.

Through these discoveries preconceptions about the world are forgotten and instead I focus on my experience. The potential for translating these moments into installations for an audience fuels my work. Though everyone experiences the world differently the pursuit of a common ground creates situations for further discoveries. The process of writing this paper has helped me to find a common thread within my work. Thinking back through the experiential discoveries of each piece has furthered my understanding, just as it originally propelled my artistic production.

*Doorway* (performance, 2006)



Figure 1, *Doorway* (video stills)



**Figure 2, *Doorway* (details)**

The performer ushers the audience from a fluorescent-lit hallway through a doorway into a darkened studio. Only the light spilling in from the doorway illuminates the empty room they have entered. Once the audience settles the performer encloses them inside by screwing a clear sheet of plexi-glass to the outside of the doorframe. Noise from outside the room is muffled except the acute sound of the electric drill. From the hallway the performer paints the plexi-glass with black enamel. Within the room the bright rectangular doorway begins to shrink and the space becomes darker as the performer paints away their light. This creates a visual barrier between the audience and the everyday light outside the studio. Once the door is completely blackened the performer waits two minutes while the audience sits in darkness. Slowly the performer draws a thin line up through the wet paint letting the florescent light shine through. A thin band of light reaches up the door. Once the line reaches the top of the door the performer retraces it with fresh paint returning the room to darkness. This process is repeated with different lines, at different speeds for 10 minutes. The piece ends as the performer removes the plexi-glass barrier, flooding the room with light.

My 2006 performance *Doorway* deals with the idea that light is both fundamentally visible and at the same time so ubiquitous that it becomes invisible. This has become a touchstone for my creative process. *Doorway* was originally inspired by my desire to experience the interior of a camera obscura.<sup>1</sup> Through the process of darkening a room to build the camera obscura, I began to see possibilities for new work. As the amount of light decreased in the space the experience of the remaining light became more dramatic. Once the window was painted black, I found a physical connection between the room and myself. Every brush stroke I ran against the painted window let light pierce into the room.

During this time I was researching the works of James Turrell. When asked about his *Skyscape* series Turrell stated “I use light by isolating it.”<sup>2</sup> In order to have a new experience with the sky, Turrell had to isolate it from its surroundings. This separation brought the sky to the surface of the gallery ceiling, allowing the viewers to engage with the sky in an interior space. The value of this aesthetic engagement with the “outside” is that the work overcomes the restraints of the gallery. In other words, *Skyscape* allows for one to visit the sky as an aesthetic experience outside of the traditional art context. It has the potential to transform future experiences of the “everyday” sky into contemplative moments. In *Doorway*, I wanted the audience to have a similar experience of reevaluating their everyday light.

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<sup>1</sup> A camera obscura is a primitive form of camera that can be created by painting the windows of a room black, creating a lightless environment. A small aperture is scratched away from a window letting light through the aperture and into the room. An image of the outdoors projected upside-down and backwards onto the interior of the room.

<sup>2</sup> James Turrell, interview with Richard Whittaker, *Greeting the light* (Works & Conversations, Feb 1999)





**Figure 3, *Skyscape 1 (day)* 1972**

The separation the audience experienced from the light outside the room allowed the viewer to see this familiar light from a new perspective. The moments spent immersed in darkness allowed time for their mind slow down to the pace of the performance, just as their eyes adjusted to the much lower light levels. The everyday light let back into the room now took on a greater physical presence by appearing to float like an object in space.

By removing visual distractions the audience had, in the writer Laurence Weschler's words, a moment for the "chatter in your mind to stop."<sup>3</sup> The chatter that he is

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<sup>3</sup> Laurence Weschler, Interview with Lawrence Weschler (Critical Mass, April 2007)

speaking of is the process of free association. The term free association is usually used in psychology when referring to the act of spontaneously associating images or experiences to reveal unconscious thoughts and emotions.<sup>4</sup> Weschler insists that we are all free associating throughout *our* lives, connecting images that we encounter with images from our past. This is something that I was trying to pause or set aside during the performance. The French poet Paul Valery wrote, “To see is to forget the name of the thing one sees.”<sup>5</sup> This is a powerful experience that is fleeting. The installation artist Robert Irwin characterized this experience like the act of swinging.

It’s like you’re on a swing, and you swing way up to the top and for a split second you can see over the wall, you can see all that light, but you’re already on your way back into the world. So you swing harder and you get a little higher and you see a little more, but back down into the world you go. To recognize something and then live there takes a tremendous conversion of your being. You don’t just swing up there and say, ‘Oh, that’s nice,’ and stay there, hanging in midair. Hanging in midair can be nice...but the world always draws you back.<sup>6</sup>

My desire is for my work to create spaces for these enlightened moments to exist.

When designing *Doorway* I wanted the experience to go from an uneasy hyperawareness to a calm meditative space. The installation of the plexi-glass by screwing it to the doorframe was a choice made to emphasize the enclosed, trapped feeling within the room. The drill sound was integrated into the performance to create an unnerving intrusion within the quiet darkened space. When the plexi-glass was completely painted

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<sup>4</sup> The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition (United States, Houghton Mifflin Company 2006)

<sup>5</sup> Laurence Weschler, Seeing is forgetting the name of the thing one sees (California, University of California Press 1982) p. 203

<sup>6</sup> Laurence Weschler, Seeing is forgetting the name of the thing one sees (California, University of California Press 1982) p.202

the audience was left to sit and adjust to the lightless room. This moment in darkness built up anticipation for an action or event. By slowly letting light back into the room, I wanted the experience of restless anxiety to change into a relaxed focus on the phenomena of light.

From this performance I learned that I was assuming too much of my audience. Everyone will experience this piece differently. I wanted total control of their experiences, which I know now to be impossible. The viewers were put in the position of the spectator, experiencing a theatrical event rather than an intimate encounter with light.

One of the main goals of this work was to edit out the distractions of external light and sound. I performed this piece in different settings and to a varied amount of audience members. When shown to a few people in an intimate space, the audience was more likely to have a transformative experience with light. On the other hand with larger groups agitation and anxiety pulled the piece away from my original intentions. Another issue with this performance was the audience's increased awareness of my body and actions as I painted. This distracted from the intended focus of the work, the light itself. In future works I avoided using my body as a performing element in the work. By creating installations that existed on their own and allowing the audience to approach the work without my interaction, they could experience it at their own pace.

*Closet Filter* (installation, 2006)

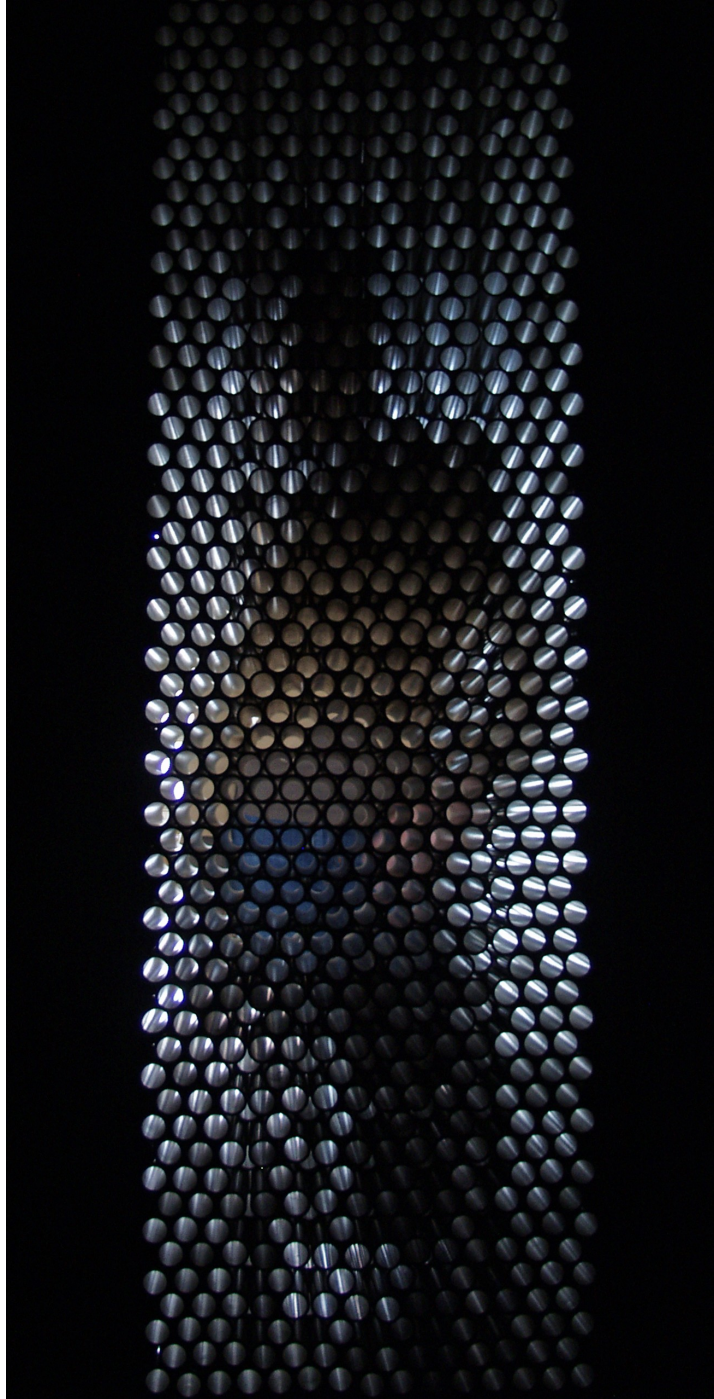


Figure 4, *Closet Filter* (interior)





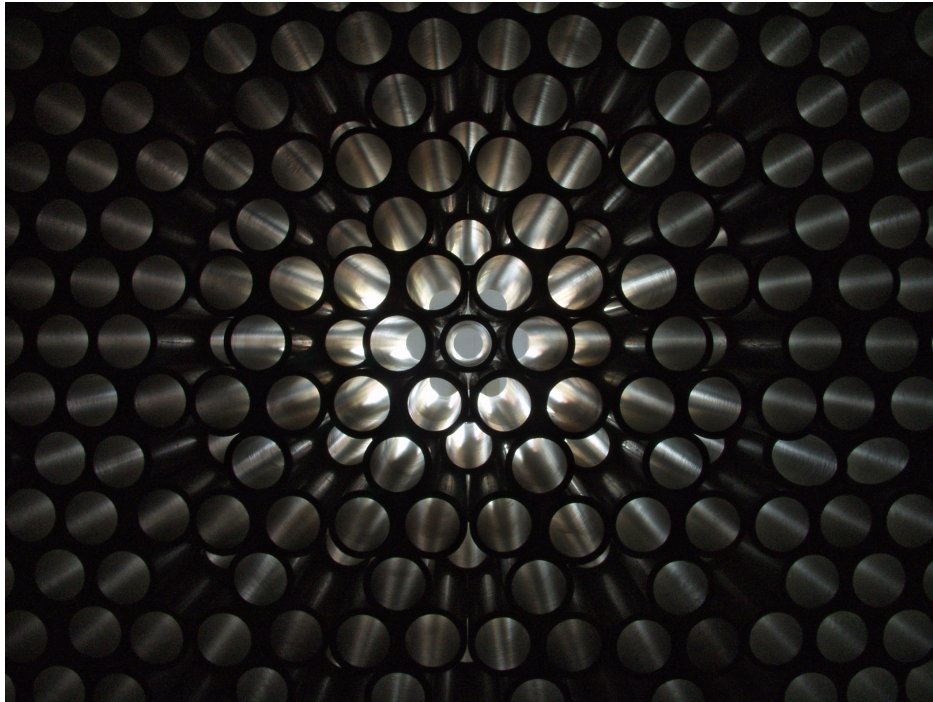
**Figure 5, *Closet Filter* (multiple views)**

In the installation *Closet Filter* a storage closet (7ft x 3ft x 6.5ft) is converted into a wedge shaped darkened space. Light enters the closet from a single doorway-sized window. This window becomes a filter for the light, but is also a barrier separating the viewer from their everyday space and experience of light. The window frame is filled with hundreds of one inch diameter PVC pipe that are stacked into a grid. The geometric grid pattern created from the tubes allows light to pass through but also narrows the viewer's perspective. To look through the filter the viewer has to peer through a one-foot length of tube, thus constricting their frame of reference even further. As a result one can only see to the outside through a few of the tubes at a time. This vantage point travels with the viewer's perspective (depending on height and distance from the filter). The opening of the PVC pipes which are out of the viewer's perspective appear as solid circles of light. This focuses the view in a manner similar to how a camera's viewfinder blocks out the rest of the environment when composing a shot.

The idea of separation became a key element in my 2006 installation *Closet Filter* as well as my 2007 *Motion Series*. Through these two works the concept evolved as I continued to explore different ways of experiencing light. In *Closet Filter*, an installation that followed my *Doorway* performance, the entry point into the darkened space- that is the doorframe- was an organizing element in the work. The doorframe became a symbol or reminder for the separation between the viewer and their everyday environment. Instead of leading the audience into a room and trapping them inside, *Closet Filter* asks the viewer to enter a small closet by him or herself, consciously separating themselves from their everyday environment. The closet's size was scaled down allowing enough room for one viewer. Rather than experiencing the work as part of an audience, the isolation makes room for an individual encounter.

The space was created for a specific experience with light, free of distractions by interpersonal relations. However, during the critique there were many people outside the closet interacting with whomever was inside. Instead of myself facilitating the visuals for the audience, as I did in *Doorway*, those outside the closet became performers. As the audience moved through the room, their bodies would shade the light entering the filter; this created patterns of color in the tubes when viewed from inside the closet. It soon turned into a game between those outside the closet and the viewer inside. This unplanned element of the work took attention from the experience of the light and brought focus to

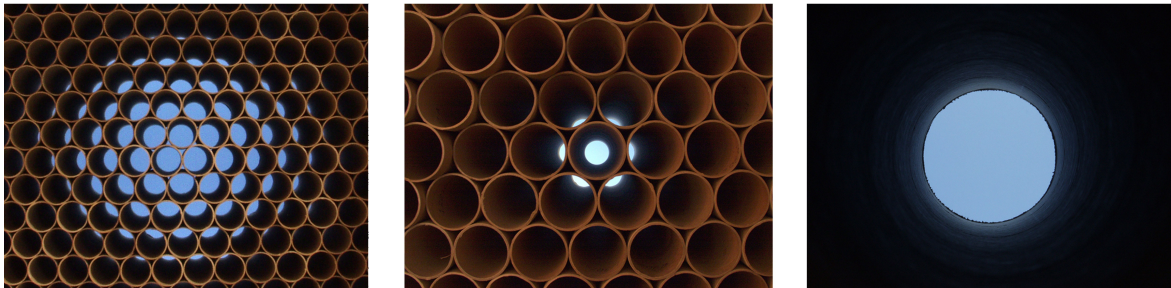
the relationship between the viewer and the audience. This was outside my intentions and seemed disruptive.



**Figure 6, *Closet Filter* (reflected light)**

A vital part of my inspiration for *Closet Filter* was my engagement with the material of PVC pipe. I was especially drawn towards PVC pipe because of its ability to act as a window or frame that narrows the focus of vision. Like the childhood makeshift telescope of a paper towel cardboard tube, the tunnel effect of the PVC tubing creates a new way of looking at the everyday. Another element that drew me to the PVC tubing is the reflective quality of the white interior plastic. The light that filters through the tubing reflects on the interior surface, intensifying its color and its brilliance. In *Closet Filter* the viewer looks at the pipe at an angle. All that is visible is the color reflecting on the inside. This color seems to push forward to the surface of the pipe as if it were a reflective coin.

This intensification of the light of the everyday is similar to the way light became its own entity in the *Doorway* performance.



**Figure 7, *Motion Series #4* (approach)**

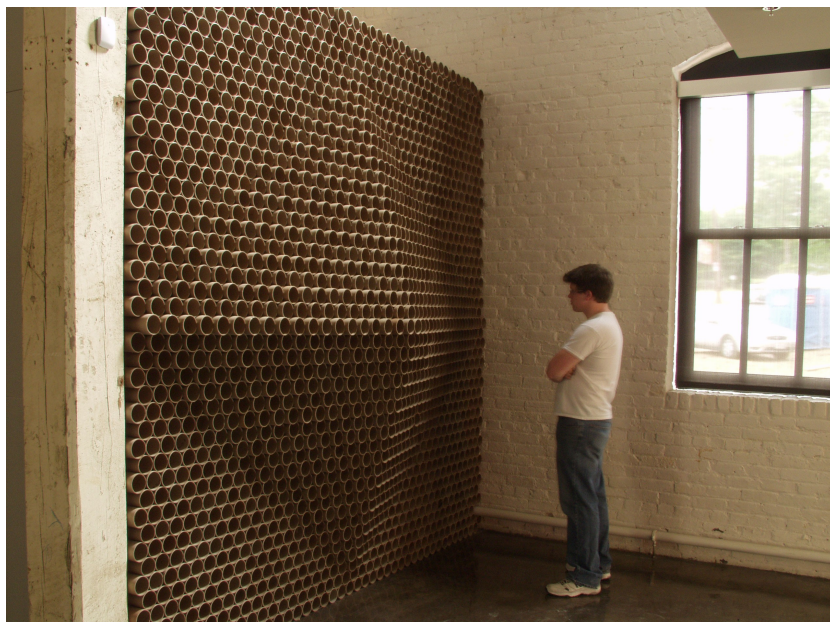
While working on *Closet Filter*, I discovered that different patterns would appear in the grid of PVC depending on the body's perspective. At a distance the patterns formed are large and complex. When one approaches the tubes the pattern simplifies and narrows. The closet was too small to fully experience this phenomenon, so I began to design a larger installation emphasizing multiple perspectives. In my piece *Motion Series #4* I used a similar system of stacking tubes, but eliminated the audience interaction with one another by allowing access to only one side. This limitation changed the focus of the work to an awareness of oneself in relation to the filter.



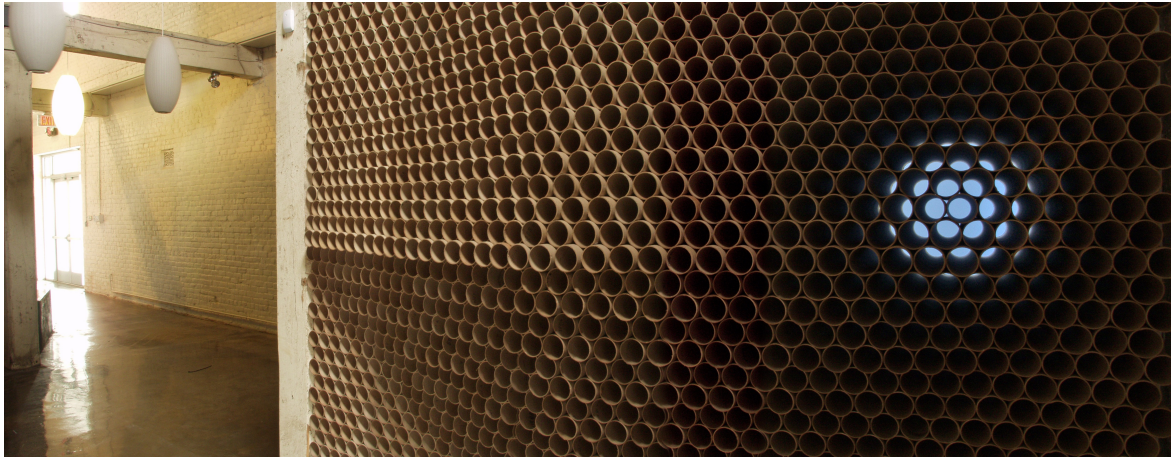
***Motion Series (installation, 2007)***



**Figure 8, *Motion Series #4* (two dimensional perspective)**



**Figure 9, *Motion Series #4* (three dimensional perspective)**



**Figure 10, *Motion Series #4***

*Motion Series #4* is an eleven-foot tall grid of drafting tubes held together by the architecture of the building (a wooden brace supporting the roof and an exterior wall). Through the tubes one can see blue light filtering through the negative shapes. The viewer is directly confronted with the work upon entering into the exhibit and must walk towards it to fully enter the gallery. When walking toward the form the movement of the light within the tubes catches ones eye. With every step their perspective is altered. As the eye moves across the piece light jumps from tube to tube following the viewer's perspective. The work moves with the body. At first the work appears two-dimensional; the rows of tubes are perceived as a system of circles filled with blue light. This two-dimensional illusion dissipates the closer one is to the work. The drafting tubes project out from the surface of the grid to form a pyramidal geometric shape. The shape pushes out towards the viewer creating a change in their perception from the two-dimensional grid to the three-dimensional pyramid. As the viewer understands the spatial depth of the form an interesting play of light presents itself. Blue light appears to push through the tubes towards the viewer as well as recede into infinity.

The work reveals itself to the audience through their physical encounter. This relation between the viewer and the art is similar to situations in the work of Olafur Eliasson. Eliasson makes work to create an awareness of “seeing yourself seeing.”<sup>7</sup> Many of his installations create settings where the viewer’s normal perception is altered through the experience of the piece. Eliasson states,

...the work itself I often refer to it as some machine or phenomena maker or a situation, without an individual person being a part of it, it doesn’t really do much....I would like to make sense of the world by sensing the world.<sup>8</sup>

Eliasson’s work asks for a proactive subject that becomes aware of their perceptions. He gives ownership to the viewer by naming many of his projects with the pronoun “your” (*Your Sun Machine, Your Compound View, Your Horizon Activity*).<sup>9</sup> Giving ownership to the viewer prevents the work from becoming whole without a spectator. In Eliasson’s view the “perceiver becomes a producer... you project your feelings onto your surroundings- this is how you relate to them.”<sup>10</sup>

The *Motion Series* created a situation where the audience’s physical location in the gallery altered their perception of the patterns of light within the grid. This phenomenon drew the viewer into the gallery as they followed the changing patterns within the work.

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<sup>7</sup> Olafur Eliasson, interview with Robert Irwin, Take Your Time: Olafur Eliasson. (Germany, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Hames & Hjudson, 2008) p. 57

<sup>8</sup> Olafur Eliasson, Seeing Yourself Seeing (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art 2005-2007)

<sup>9</sup> Madeleine Grynsztejn, (Y)our entanglements: Olafur Eliasson (The Museum, and Consumer Culture, in *Take Your Time, Olafur Eliasson*. Thames & Hudson 2008) p.14

<sup>10</sup> Olafur Eliasson, interview with Robert Irwin, Take Your Time: Olafur Eliasson. (Germany, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Hames & Hjudson, 2008)

Engaging with the filtered light caused the viewers to move their bodies differently in the space. Bobbing side-to-side or shifting perspective up and down by bending their knees drew a reciprocal response in the work.



***Temporal Intervals* (performance, 2007)**



**Figure 11, *Temporal Intervals* (video still)**

A steady low pitch noise fills a hallway. The audience follows the sound to find their way into a darkened gallery. Three amplifiers are arranged in a row lying on the ground. Just above each amp is a hooded light hanging from the ceiling. The lamps have different bulbs, which emit different frequencies of light. The equipment is exposed with power cords stretching across the ground. Resting on the top of the amplifiers are solar cells interpreting the light from the lamp above into an electronic signal. These signals are read by the amps and rendered as different tones emanating from the speakers. The three tones come together into a harmony that fills the room. Once the audience settles the performer pulls one of the lamps away from its sensor. When the light is no longer hitting the solar cell the sound in the room is altered leaving only two tones. The performer waits a moment before releasing the lamp into a pendulum swing. As the light swings past the solar cell a brief tone comes out of the amp. The performer moves to the next lamp and repeats the process. Each lamp is weighted differently so that they will swing at varied speeds. While the two lights swing at their own pace they create an auditory rhythm. When the performer releases the final lamp there are brief moments of silence in-between the three tones. The audience listens as the three pendulums create their own rhythmic dialogue. As the pendulums slow a pulsating drone replaces the silence. The sound continues to change for about ten minutes before returning to a single bass tone.

My 2007 performance *Temporal Intervals* had a linear duration with a definite beginning and end. *Temporal Intervals* directs attention to the passing of time in relation to objects in motion. This created a more tangible concept of time for the audience to explore.

*Temporal Intervals* existed in two different conditions. The audience encountered the piece as a static object when they entered the room and as a dynamic object once the pendulums were engaged. When the lamps began to swing the viewers felt the need to be still within the room. This was partially because of my presence as the performer. My role was only to initiate the pendulums and let the piece live out its duration. Once the lamps were swinging the audience watched me for my next move. They stood still in the corners of the room to stay out of my way. As the piece went on without further intervention from myself the audience began to take cues from the piece. As the lamps became still and returned to a single tone the audience felt the performance was over and they could move around again.

By introducing sound *Temporal Intervals* emphasizes one's connection to the present. As the lights swung past the amplifier they gave off a tone punctuating each moment of the transitory motion of the pendulum. The Icelandic artist Finnbogi Petursson uses sound in a similar way. In a 2006 interview Finnbogi stated, "My works are an acoustic image of the present. They look at time. What is actually happening now when movement occurs?"<sup>11</sup> The attention of the viewer is pulled to the present when the lights

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<sup>11</sup> Finnbogi Pétursson, interview with Gunnar Kristjánsson. Acoustic image of the present (Kunst und Kirche (Art and Church) 2/2006)

swing over the solar cells and have a corresponding sound. Thoughts are not lost within the future or the past; they become acutely attached to the present. As the momentum in the lamps decreased, the tones oscillated between blending together and spreading out into individual sounds. Gradually the sound became more fluid making it difficult to differentiate moment to moment. When the pendulums ceased to move and one tone filled the room, the perception of time passing was irresolvable. Moment bled into moment. The slowing down and final ceasing of movement of the pendulum is gradual in a manner similar to falling asleep or meditating. In this work the viewer is presented with two poles of the experience of time. One is a punctuating of each moment with sound; the other, as time passes, stretches the sound into endlessness.

These polemic experiences of time became the motivating force in my 2008 installation *A Space for Absence*. In order to encourage meditative moments in the viewer the performance element was eliminated from the event. In addition motors were incorporated into the installation to power the pendulums. This allowed the viewer to encounter the piece without becoming aware of a beginning or an end.

### ***A Space for Absence* (installation, 2008)**

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Figure 12, *A Space fro Absence (detail)*





**Figure 13, *A Space for Absence* (installation view)**

The viewer makes their way through several galleries and up the stairs to reach the piece. A hum becomes noticeable as they ascend to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The sound seems to emit from the walls of the building. Upon reaching the third floor the sound draws the viewer down a dark hallway ending in a closet sized room (9ft x 7ft x 8ft). The floor of the room is raised two feet from the ground forcing the viewer to step up to enter the space. The walls are deep black while the ceiling and floor are glossy white. Two cylindrical lights hang from black cords that seem to penetrate into the ceiling. Motors installed on the ceiling engage the cords causing them to swing in a pendulum-like motion. The two motors are on timers that initiate a new cycle every three hundred and eighty seconds for one, and every four hundred and thirty seconds for the other. The patterns between the moving lights seem irregular. Just below the lights are two five-inch glass lenses embedded in the floor. Solar cells positioned under the lenses convert the energy from the light into electricity that is then transferred into two amplifiers below the floor. Loud bass vibrates through the floor and into the room when the lights swing over the sensors.

Many of the aesthetic choices made in *A Space for Absence* were based upon its location within the gallery setting. The gallery is a social place cluttered with distractions that contaminate the viewer's experience. There is no room for personal reflection when one piece bleeds into the next only to be interrupted by social interactions. In awareness of the distracting context, the installation was designed as an oasis in the gallery. The raised floor forced the viewer to step up leaving the space of the gallery. Moving into the installation this way prepared them for a different experience. The black walls, white floor and ceiling created a situation where the viewer was urged look up and down instead of looking at the walls for information. The sound was used to cancel out the noise from the gallery and discourage dialogue within the room itself. These choices were made to isolate the viewer within the piece.

Isolation is a key element in the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard's 1958 book *The Poetics of Space*. Bachelard proposes that through our intimate encounter with spaces we could experience infinity.<sup>12</sup> While isolated in our homes we are able to fall into daydreams that Bachelard compares to the experience of meditation. While in this "meditative state" time does not exist and our minds are free to relive, remake and add to our memories.<sup>13</sup> Bachelard states, "Immensity is within ourselves. It is attached to a sort of expansion of being that life curbs and caution arrests, but which starts again when we are alone." We don't notice these moments coming and are unaware of them until they

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<sup>12</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston, Orion Press, 1994 addition) p. 183

<sup>13</sup> Ibid p.6

have passed. By allowing isolation within the gallery setting *A Space for Absence* created a place conducive to an experience similar to Bachelard's poetics.

Experiencing the contrast of an acute awareness of each passing moment, punctuated by sound, and the different consciousness of losing track of individual moments, as the sound runs together, was the goal of *A Space for Absence*. The created space allowed these conflicting experiences to exist together. Within the installation the sounds from the pendulums were in a continuing shift between acute individual sounds and a constant expansive sound that permeated the room. The experience of the sound was mirrored by the experience of the light. As the lights swung back and forth at different rates the arc of the pendulum gradually decreased until it ceased to move and hung still above the censor. Likewise, as the pendulum slowed the lights illuminated a decreasing amount of the gallery. Eventually, the light was focused into a single pool over the censor. These ceaseless transitions affect the viewer's experience of the space. At first the exact size of the room was illuminated, but when the light was constricted into a single small pool the size of the room was lost. Since the lights were on different cycles there a constant variation of spatial and mental perceptions of space. The geographer Yi-Fu Tuan related our physical senses with our conception of space. He states, "Sound itself can evoke spatial impressions. The reverberations of thunder are voluminous; the squeaking of chalk on slate is 'pinched' and thin."<sup>14</sup> Our physical experience of space is connected to our mental experience. English philosopher Michael Oakeshott theorizes, "experience is a

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<sup>14</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place* (Minnesota, University of Minnesota 1977) p.14

single whole... not merely inseparable from thought, but itself a form of thought.”<sup>15</sup> One cannot have a thought outside the body, and the body is constantly sensing the world. In a similar view Eliasson explores the concept that we use our sensory experiences to construct our realities. When asked about his emphasis on sensations he answered:

Physical experience makes a much deeper impression than a purely intellectual encounter. I can explain to you what it's like to feel cold, but I can also have you feel the cold yourself through my art. My goal is to sensitize people to highly complex questions.... My real subject is people. I am ultimately fascinated by the question: What is reality for us? We have all learned that there is no single true reality. But how do we get our bearings, and how are we aligned?

*A Space for Absence* allows for a range of experience of both time and space. The viewers are left with the role of aligning themselves within the constantly shifting installation.

This alignment is drastically altered depending on whether a viewer is by themselves or with other participants. The addition of a social element into the situation draws attention away from the lights. The small room amplifies the connection between audience members. The person entering the room looks to whoever is inside for clues or answers to the piece. The person in the space is taken out of their personal experience into a social confrontation. I was told, “it’s like being caught staring off into space.” The viewers become hyperaware of each other and the confrontation usually ends with one person leaving. This element of the installation is a flaw from my original intention; however, this flaw will become the basis for developing new forms. I am interested in

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<sup>15</sup> Michael Oakshott, *Experience and Its Modes* (Great Britain, Cambridge at the Univ. Press, 1993) p. 10

creating installations for a single viewer, encouraging an introspective environment. Also, in future works the fundamentals of light, movement, and sound, from a *Space for Absence* could be incorporated into larger rooms to create similar experiences within a social setting.

I leave this thesis where I leave all my projects, with questions. Can a viewer experience true isolation within a staged environment, or does the constructed installation itself create an awareness of my hand as the practitioner? How do varying degrees of isolation change our perception of similar works? And how does the experience of isolation affect our re-entry into our everyday?

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Madeleine Grynsztejn, (Y)our entanglements: Olafur Eliasson (The Museum, and Consumer Culture, in Take Your Time, Olafur Eliasson. Thames & Hudson 2008)

Michael Oakshott, Experience and Its Modes (Great Britain, Cambridge at the Univ. Press, 1993)

Olafur Eliasson, interview with Robert Irwin, Take Your Time: Olafur Eliasson. (Germany, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Hames & Hjudson, 2008)

Olafur Eliasson, Seeing Yourself Seeing (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art 2005-2007)  
< <http://www.sfmoma.org/multimedia/videos/325?autoplay=true>>

Yi-Fu Tuan, Space and Place (Minnesota, University of Minnesota 1977)

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition (United States, Houghton Mifflin Company 2006)

## **VITA**

### **Education:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Year Graduate Student  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
Photography and Film  
2006-Present

- Graduate teaching assistantship
- Areas of specialization: Installation
- Will receive MFA in May 2008

B.F.A.  
Kansas City Art Institute  
Interdisciplinary Art  
2002-2006

- Areas of Specialization: Sculpture, Installation Art, and Photography.
- Deans List Fall 2003- Spring 2006
- I studied three semesters in the Sculpture Department and then transferred to the Interdisciplinary Department to pursue light based installations.

### **Teaching Experience/ Academic Appointments:**

Fall 2008  
Instructor  
Basic Camera  
Visual Arts Center, (Richmond, VA)

- This course reviews the fundamentals of image capture and camera operation, guidelines for achieving proper exposures, and techniques for creating successful photo images.

Summer 2008  
Instructor  
Digital Photography  
Virginia Commonwealth University, (Richmond, VA)

- This course presents the concepts, techniques, and processes of digital photography, including visualizing, capturing, scanning, computer manipulation, and printing. Emphasis is placed on creative picture making. Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator software will be used in a Macintosh OSX operating system. No prior

experience with this software is required. Knowledge of the operation of your camera is required.

Spring 2008

Instructor

Studio Photography (PHTO 441)

Virginia Commonwealth University, (Richmond, VA)

- The focus of this course is on lighting. Students learn how to use hot lights, strobes, and experimental lighting techniques to complete their assignments. Projects are shot using both digital and 4 x 5 cameras.

Spring 2007-Present

Department Technician

Virginia Commonwealth University, (Richmond, VA)

- My responsibilities vary from week to week.
- Run equipment checkout, document visiting artist lectures (sound & video), design and construct studios, setup sound room (acoustic foam, 5.1 surround), install printers, layout flyers, represent department for open house, maintenance on enlargers & photo equipment, etc.

Spring 2007

Instructor

Studio Photography (PHTO 441)

Virginia Commonwealth University, (Richmond, VA)

Fall 2006

Teaching Assistant

Advanced Studio (PHTO 490 & 491)

Virginia Commonwealth University, (Richmond, VA)

2006–2007

Portfolio Reviewer

Virginia Commonwealth University, (Richmond, VA)

- Reviewed high school portfolios for applicants to the Art Foundation Program.

2007

Guest Critic

Time Studio (ARTF 134)

- Invited to critique student performances.

2004

Proctor

Foundations Department, Kansas City Art Institute, (Kansas City, MO)



- Instructed classes during a drawing workshop.

### **Professional Experience:**

2008-Present

Studio Assistant / Digital Editor

Lee Brauer Photography

- Assist Lee on photo shoots documenting architecture throughout the Richmond area.  
Digitally editing photographs preparing them for customer approval.

2004-2006

Project Photographer and Studio Assistant

Steven Whitacre (artist, professor Kansas City Art Institute)

- Documented sculptures in progress to completion. Also designed his portfolios for competitions and awards.

2005- 2006

Photographer

A. Zahner Co. (Kansas City, MO)

- Photographed architectural sites and sculptures for publications and their website.

2005-2006

Project Photographer

LPF High Performance Coatings, (Kansas City, MO)

- Documented projects such as monuments and commercial lighting.

2001-2004

Manager (2003-2004)

Intern/Designer (2001-2003)

Mr. Detail Signs, (Bettendorf, IA)

- Ran the shop, took orders, figured bids, and managed three craftsmen. I began as an intern and worked my way up to manager during my summer and winter breaks from Kansas City Art Institute.

### **Honors/ Awards:**

2006-Present

Graduate Teaching Assistantship

Virginia Commonwealth University, (Richmond, VA)

2002-2006

#### Competitive Scholarship

Kansas City Art Institute, (Kansas City, MO)

- \$12,000 a year granted for four years, I was one of twelve students selected based on my portfolio and personal statement.

2002-2006

#### Brand Boeshar Scholarship

Davenport Museum of Fine Arts, (Davenport, IA)

- \$12,000 Tuition Assistance dispersed over four years.

#### **Exhibitions:**

2008

Thesis Show

Anderson Gallery, (Richmond, VA)

2007

*Candidacy Show*

Corrugated Box Gallery, (Richmond, VA)

2006

*Show Me Off Creations*

Starlight Theatre, (Kansas City, MO)

2006

*KCAI BFA Show*

H&R Block Artspace, (Kansas City, MO)

2005

*Kansas City Flatfile Show*

H&R Block Artspace, (Kansas City, MO)

2005

*Thirteenth Mind*

INDA Gallery, (Kansas City, MO)

2005

*Sympathetic Contrast*

Lynn foundation gallery, (Kansas City, MO)

2004

Ordered Chaos

IMIG Gallery

Kansas City, MO, 64111

